

9. Fuji visible from 19 prefectures

The advent¹ of clear autumn skies gives me something else to enjoy until winter. There are more days now when I can see Mount Fuji clearly while commuting to work. It is not possible to see Mount Fuji from Tokyo as often in spring and summer.

It's said: "You're a fool if you don't climb Mount Fuji once, and you're a bigger fool if you climb it twice." But the mountain gives you a magnificent view no matter how many times you look at it. Its graceful figure is indescribably² elegant. When you approach Japan by plane or ship, the peak of Mount Fuji towering above³ the clouds looks like a huge nameplate of the country.

Hiroshi Tashiro, a geography teacher at Seya-Nishi Senior High School in Kanagawa Prefecture, once made⁴ his senior high students draw pictures of Mount Fuji from their mental images of it. He was interested in how accurately the students would draw the angle of ascent from the mountain's foothills to its peak. Practically⁵ all the drawings showed a steeper angle than that of the actual mountain. The students apparently had in their minds an image of Mount Fuji that was similar to that entertained⁶ by the woodblock print artist Katsushika Hokusai in the late Edo Era (1603-1867). Hokusai is well known, among other things⁷, for his pictures of Mount Fuji that are steeper than actual fact.

From how far away can towering Mount Fuji be seen? According to the survey results Tashiro reported in the October issue of Tohoku Electric Power Co.'s publicity magazine, "Shiroi Kuni no Ura"

(Poem of a White Country), the farthest point from which Mount Fuji can be seen is the Mount Nachi area in Wakayama Prefecture, followed by Mount Hiyanama in Fukushima Prefecture. He reported that Mount Fuji can be seen from 19 prefectures, which I feel is quite a considerable number.

Tashiro also wrote that 31 prefectures across the country have place names that include the term *Fujimi* (looking at Fuji), like *Fujimi-dai* (Fuji viewing stand or hill) and *Fujimi-toge* (Fuji viewing pass⁸). However, there are some prefectures among the 31 from which Mount Fuji cannot be seen. Probably in some cases the name Fuji included in such place names refers to local mountains that are named after Mount Fuji. According to him, people have named places "Fujimida" not because Fuji can be seen from those places but because they want to see Fuji from them.

Tashiro and his friends who like Mount Fuji are using personal computers to make a Mount Fuji Visibility Map. The map appearing on the computer screen shows the areas from which Mount Fuji can be seen and those from which it cannot. On Oct. 20 they will start the Forum on the Mountain View and Maps on the personal computer network NIFTY Serve.

Those who are expected to take part in the forum calculate⁹ on their computers on their desks the areas from which the mountain is visible. They then go to the actual sites to check their calculation (58ページへつづく)

9 「富士山可視マップ」

秋の空が澄んでくると、冬にかけて、樂しみが一つふえる。通勤の途中、きまつた場所¹で、富士山をくつきりと望める日が多くなるのだ。春と夏は、こうはゆかない。

「一度も登らぬばか、二度登るばか」などというが、見る分には、富士山は何度眺めてもすばらしい山である。端正で優雅なさまが、えもいわれぬ風情だ。海外から飛行機や船で日本に近づくと、雲海の上にそびえる富士の頂は、大きな門標のように見える。

神奈川県立瀬谷西高校で社会科・地理を教えている田代博さんは、かつて高校生に、写生ではなく、富士山の絵を描かせたそう²だ。すそから山頂にいたる線の角度をどのくらい正確に描くかに興味があった。ほとんどの生徒の絵が実物より急角度だった。頭の中では北斎のように描いているらしい。

そそり立つ富士山は、どのくらい遠くから見えるものだろう。田代さんが東北電力の広報誌「白い国の詩」十月号に発表した調査によると、最も遠いところは和歌山県の那智山

周辺、次が福島県の日山だという。富士山が見えるのは十九の都県に及ぶというから、かなり広い範囲である。

富士見町、富士見峠のように「富士見」がつく地名は、全国三十一の都県にあるそう³だ。実際には富士山が見えない県もあることとなる。これは地元「○○富士」の場合もあろう。見えないが「富士見たい」という意味の「富士見台」もあるとか。

田代さんと、富士山が好きで仲間たちは、パソコンを使って「富士山可視マップ」をつくっている。画面の地図上に、富士山が見える地域と見えない地域が現れる。今月二十日、パソコン通信ネットワークに「山の展望」と地図の「フォーラム」を發足させる。

机上のコンピュータで山の可視圏などを割り出し、足で現場に赴く人々。「富嶽三十六景」のころとはまた違う富士の味わい方があららしい。